Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (withdrawn): A method of treating a vulnerable plaque associated with a blood vessel of a patient, the method comprising:

rupturing a fibrous cap of the vulnerable plaque;

releasing a portion of liquid contents of the vulnerable plaque into a blood vessel lumen as a result of the fibrous cap rupture; and

capturing at least one of any emboli present within the blood vessel as a result of the fibrous cap rupture.

Claim 2 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 wherein rupturing the fibrous cap comprises compressing the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 3 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 wherein rupturing the fibrous cap comprises incising the fibrous cap.

Claim 4 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 wherein rupturing the fibrous cap comprises administering ultrasonic energy.

Claim 5 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 wherein rupturing the fibrous cap comprises administering electromagnetic radiation energy.

Claim 6 (withdrawn): The method of claim 5 wherein the electromagnetic radiation is selected from a group consisting of radio wave radiation, microwave radiation, infrared radiation, visible light radiation, ultraviolet radiation, x-ray radiation, alpha radiation, beta radiation, and gamma radiation.

Claim 7 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 wherein the fibrous cap is ruptured with a device selected from the group consisting of a balloon device, a lasing

device, a heating device, an ultrasonic device, a radio frequency device, a device for delivering radiation, and an incising device.

Claim 8 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 wherein capturing the emboli comprises deploying a distal protection device.

Claim 9 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 wherein capturing the emboli comprises aspirating the emboli.

Claim 10 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 further comprising detecting the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 11 (withdrawn): The method of claim 10 wherein detecting the vulnerable plaque comprises labeling the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 12 (withdrawn): The method of claim 10 wherein detecting the vulnerable plaque comprises determining a temperature of the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 further comprising releasing a portion of solid contents of the vulnerable plaque into the blood vessel lumen as the result of the fibrous cap rupture.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 further comprising stenting the blood vessel adjacent the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 further comprising cauterizing the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 further comprising removing a portion of the ruptured fibrous cap.

Claim 17 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 further comprising monitoring the treatment of the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 18 (withdrawn): The method of claim 1 further comprising administering at least one therapeutic agent to the patient.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): The method of claim 18 wherein the therapeutic agent is selected from a group consisting of antiangiogenesis agents, antiarteriosclerotic agents, antiarythmic agents, antibiotics, antibodies, antidiabetic agents, antiendothelin agents, antinflammatory agents, antimitogenic factors, antioxidants, antiplatelet agents, antiproliferative agents, antisense agents, calcium channel blockers, clot dissolving enzymes, growth factor inhibitors, growth factors, immunosuppressants, nitrates, nitric oxide releasing agents, vasodilators, and virus-mediated gene transfer agents.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): A system for treating a vulnerable plaque associated with a blood vessel of a patient, the system comprising:

a ~~rupture device~~ balloon that ruptures a fibrous cap of the vulnerable plaque; and

a capture device that captures at least one embolus within the blood vessel.

Claim 21 (cancelled):

Claim 22 (original): The system of claim 20 wherein the capture device is selected from a group consisting of a distal protection device and an aspiration device.

Claim 23 (original): The system of claim 20 further comprising a detection device that detects the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 24 (original): The system of claim 23 wherein the detection device comprises a thermal sensor.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): The system of claim 20 further comprising a stent operably coupled to the ~~rupture device~~ balloon.

Claim 26 (original): The system of claim 20 further comprising a cauterizing device that cauterizes the vulnerable plaque.

Claim 27 (original): The system of claim 20 further comprising a therapeutic agent delivery device.